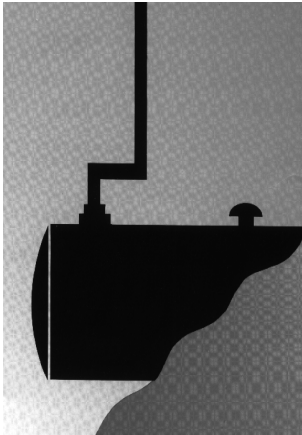


New Report



■ Risk-Based Decision Making Performance Assessment Study: Bulletin #2

(EPA-510-R-00-002)

★ See the back of this announcement for a detailed summary of this Study

Audience:

This report on research findings will be of interest to State UST program managers, EPA HQ and Regional managers, and others interested in underground storage tank (UST) corrective action program management.

Purpose of the report:

This Bulletin describes the results of a research effort funded by the EPA Office of Underground Storage Tanks (OUST) and conducted by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) through an assistance agreement. The effort was undertaken to assist State environmental regulatory agencies with the evaluation of the performance of their risk-based decision making (RBDM) corrective action programs for leaking USTs. The effort reviewed five individual State programs that have augmented their existing programs with RBDM and evaluated the impact RBDM has made on overall program performance. Bulletin #2 presents the results of the Study, evaluates the findings, and provides general recommendations for other State agencies interested in tracking the performance of their RBDM programs.

OUST has sent copies to:

OUST has sent printed copies of the Bulletin to State UST/LUST Program Managers, State Fund Administrators, EPA Regional UST/LUST Program Managers, and trade journals.

How to get additional copies or more information:

You can use the Internet to download a copy of the Bulletin from OUST's World Wide Web Home Page at <http://www.epa.gov/swerust1/rbdlm/pastudy.htm>. Additional printed copies are available from NSCEP, OUST's publications warehouse: Call NSCEP toll-free at 800 490-9198 to order. You may also order copies by calling EPA's toll-free Hotline at 800 424-9346. OUST contact for the report is: Richard Mattick, mattick.richard@epa.gov, 703 603-7154.

Summary of RBDM Performance Assessment Study Bulletin #2

What is this Study about?

The Risk-Based Decision Making Performance Assessment Study was conducted as a research effort to assist State and Territorial environmental regulatory agencies with the evaluation of the performance of their risk-based decision making (RBDM) corrective action programs for leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs). The Study was funded by the U.S. EPA Office of Underground Storage Tanks (OUST) under an assistance agreement to the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM). The results have been reviewed by participating States, EPA OUST and Regions, and the Partnership in Risk-Based Corrective Action Implementation. See Bulletin #1 on the OUST Home Page for more details on the Study background.

What were the goals of the Study?

The specific goals were:

- To develop practical, quantitative measures for evaluating the impact of RBDM on State underground storage tank (UST) corrective action programs. The measures were designed to evaluate how well an RBDM approach was achieving the common UST corrective action program goals of: risk reduction; expedited evaluation, remediation, and closure; and cost control/resource allocation.
- To apply these measures to five State RBDM programs (Illinois, Iowa, North Carolina, Texas, and Utah) to evaluate performance.
- To provide general guidelines and recommendations for other State and Territorial environmental agencies interested in tracking the performance of their RBDM corrective action programs.

What were the Study's findings?

In the majority of the five State programs evaluated, implementation of an RBDM program resulted in an increase in case closures and a decrease or stabilization in case backlogs. Additional findings indicate that RBDM programs can successfully target low-risk sites for closure while retaining higher-risk sites for further action.

What do these findings mean?

In general, the observed reduction in case backlogs and increase in case closures is likely to reduce the administrative burden for a program, allowing for a more efficient allocation of available resources. When the reduction in case backlog primarily occurs for low-risk sites, available resources are more likely to be targeted to higher-risk sites. Interpretation of the findings may be complicated by confounding factors. Program performance is best understood through the evaluation of multiple performance measures that cover all of the RBDM program goals.

What does the Study recommend I do to track the performance of my State program?

The Study recommends that a State customize its tracking database to include data fields that will allow for a balanced assessment of a program. It recommends that you use the performance measures created for this Study as a starting point. In addition, the Study found that the following database parameters could significantly impact the ability to track program performance:

- Tracking the basis for closure
- Surveying the risk-based site classification of the LUST population in the database over time for a measure of risk reduction
- Including information on total remediation costs at a site
- Recording specific constituents at a site (e.g., MTBE) to gauge the impact individual constituents may have on performance measures at the site